John Back, at the *Black-Boy*, on *London-Bridge*, Furniſheth any Gentlemen or Chap-Men with all ſorts of *BOOKS*, *BALLADS* and all other Stationary-Wares, at Reaſonable Rates.

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The HISTORY of the *BLIND BEGGAR* of BEDNAL-GREEN.

This may be Printed, R. P.
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The HISTORY of the *Blind Beggar* of *Bednal-Green*, &c.

CHAP. I.

How *Monford* the Beggar of *Bednal-Green* went, accompanied with his Wife, to the Wars of *France*, and by what means he came to loose his Sight, and save his Life, and of his Return to *England*, &c.

IN Former Days when the Rose of England Eclipsed the Lillies of France, and true English Vallour made that Nation stoop; amongst other Brave Gallants that went over to try their Fortune, Monford was one, a Person well Descended, who being naturally inclin'd to War, and greedy of Fame, neither the entreaty of Friends nor the Marriage he had Contracted with a Kind and beautiful woman, could alter his purpose, but taking his Wife Margaret with him, who by no means would be induced to stay behind, he with many hundreds more crossed the Seas, and with the help of a prosperous wind arriving at Callice, Marched to the Royal Standard,

accompanied with his Loving Wife, who in Man-like attire became his inseparable Companion in Danger and Hazzard, and was the cause of saving his Life; for many Skirmishes happening between the English and French, wherein Young Monford behaved himself with wondrous Courage, and in one, following too hotly the pursuit, was, with divers others, intrapped in an Ambush late in the Evening and though he manfully disputed it, making great Slaughter of the Enemy, yet in spight of resistance, he was beaten from his Horse by the forcible Stroak of a Pole-Ax, given him on the Face, and left in the Field for Dead amongst the dead and Dying-Men, where he had undoubtedly perished through loss of Blood and the anguish of his Wound, had not his Tender-hearted Love, upon her hearing what had happened, and his not returning, hasted to the field, where amongst the Slain, she by Moon-light discovered him stripped and strugling for Life, and by the help of a Servant, brought him to a Shepherds Cottage, where she carefully dressed his Wounds, and administred such Cordials as brought him to himself, to her unspeakable joy, though this joy was somewhat abated when she found by the forcibleness of the Blow he had lost his Sight: But true Love working in her heart the alteration or disfigurement

of

of his Countenance could not alter her affection; but Comforting him in the best she could (though indeed) his natural Courage would not lightly admit of any dejection, she with part of the money she had, procur'd him a homely Suit of Apparel, and brought him (now unfit for Service) back to England; of whose Entertainment and settlement at Bednal-Green in the County of Middlesex, and course of Life, you shall hear in the following Chapter.

CHAP. II.

How *Monford* arrived in *England*, and of the cold Entertainment he found amongst his Relations; how he came to *Bednal-Green*, and settling himself there, he continued to Begg for his Living, *&c.*

MOnford escaping a Storm at Sea, in his Return Landed with his Vertuous Wife on the Coast of Essex, where he had some considerable Relations, to whom in this necessity they applyed themselves for succour, but they either not desirous of his Company, who after the death of his Parents had wasted much of his Patrimony, or fearing in that condition he might be chargeable to them, would not know him, and those that were convinced he was the same Monford that went over into France, gave him but cold Entertainment, insomuch

somuch that morning to rely upon their Charity, he told the kind Partner of his joy and sorrow, that he intended early in the morning to hast towards London, and that he would rather trust to Providence then to the ingratitude of those who in his prosperous days had Carressed him in a high manner; and so without taking Leave of any, Early in the morning they departed; and in two days travelling (having spent the little Money they had reserved) necessity that has no Law, so far humbled his big Spirit, that he did not think it amiss (especially in places where he was not known) to crave the Charity of the People as he passed through several good Towns, who understanding that he came by his misfortune in Fighting for the Honour of his Country, gave very Liberally, insomuch that he resolved to be of good cheer, and thereupon considering with himself that he was never brought up to Labour, or if he had, the Loss of his Sight had rendred him incapable of business; he resolved to embrace what Providence had cast in his way: Which was, to live upon Charity, which he found to flow in upon him faster then he expected: Whereupon arriving at Bednal-Green, a place near London, he with the little Money he had got, hired a small Cottage for his Wife and himself, and daily

appearing

appearing publick to crave Alms, was from thence called the Beggar of Bednal-Green, and in a short time found it a thriveing Trade, insomuch that his Bed of Straw was changed into Down, and his Earthen Platters and other Utensils into a better Sort. His Wife whilst he begged abroad not being idle at home, but Laboured at the Wheel and such other matters as in her younger years she had learned.

CHAP. III.

How *Monford* happened to meet with *Snap* an Old Experienced Beggar, who gave him an insight into the mistery of the canting Tribe, and how he invited him to their general Randesvouze, *&c.*

MOnford resolving in this kind of way to spend the remainder of his Days, that he might humble himself for his former offences, having plyed it with good success in the place where he lived, by the Road side he was incountred one day by an Old Proficient at that Trade, who seeing him Diligent, became greatly desirous of his acquaintance, and to know what Gang he belonged to, and began to Cant (as is usual amongst such seasoned Sticks of that Profession) of which kind of Speech being known to none but themselves,

Monford being ignorant, could make him no direct answer; which the other, whose Name was Snap, perceiving, and thereby knowing him to be a young beginner, invited him to their Feasts or rendezvouze in White-Chappel, whither he having promised to come, and they between them tip'd off four Black Pots of Rum they at that time parted.

CHAP. IV.

How *Monford* went to the Beggars Feast, and of his Entertainment as also of the Present they made him, &c.

MOnford upon his coming home, declared to his Wife what a merry Companion he had met with, and what discourse they had, as likewise what he had promised, entreating her to get things in a readiness, that she might be at leasure to conduct him thither, where appeared, instead of a ragged Regiment of Lame, Blind, and Dumb, there was a rout of jobial Dancers, as gay as the Spring, and as merry as the Maids; which made them imagine they were either mistaken in the place, or had been imposed upon, and therefore were about to retire, had not Snap who knew Monford at the first Blush, Carried from his Chair where he sat Supervizor in all his Gallantry, and taking

king him by the hand, let him know who he was, and afterward presented him to the whole Assembly, who received him as a Brother or Member of their Society, each (by the order of Snap) paying him a Complement: and that for the future he might not want a Guide on all occasion, Snap in the name of the rest presented him with a Dog and a Bell trained to the Business, and had before been the Companion of an Eyeless Beggar deceased; and so having Feasted him and his Spouse in a Splendid manner, they dismissed him, upon his promise that he would not be wanting at that yearly meeting; and being dismissed, he trudged home with his tractable Guide, which ever after proved serviceable to him.

CHAP. V.

What success he had in his *Begging* Trade, and how a Daughter was born to him, and Christned by the name of *Elizabeth*.

THe Blind Beggar by these Fortunate adventures, being in a manner Master of his Trade, scorned to be confined to his former plying places, but by the help of his Dog trudged often to London; and having the perfect Tone, had for the most part the luck to return with his Pockets well Lined with Chink, and by

by long practice, his way of begging became so pleasing to him, that he would often profess it the happyest part of his Life, and thus Tune his Pipes upon occasion.

His SONG.

A Beggar lives a merry Life,
he hath both wealth and ease,
His days are free from care and strife,
he does what e're he please
Whilst others Labour sweat & toil,
his tongue doth get him pelf,
He travels with his Dog and bell,
and brings home store of Wealth.

He being by this time in a warm condition, to add further to his joy, and make him amends for his loss of Sight, his Loving and careful Wife fell in Labour, and brought forth the Lovelieſt Girl imaginable, whose birth made him quite forget his former misfortunes, and think himself the happiest man alive; an hundred times he kissed her, and dandled her in his arms, and at her Christening (which was managed with decency and prudence) caused her to be Named Elizabeth, from whence she was afterward deservedly called pretty Betty; for as she grew up she exceeded in Beauty to a degree of wonder, and courteous and seemly behaviour

haviour no less obliging, so that in her very Childhood some began to dote upon her admirable Perfections, and the better to qualifie her, gave her such Learning as was suitable to her Degree, which she improved to the height, so that her Beauty and Wit, her skill in Singing, Dancing, and playing on Instruments of Musick, procured her the envy of the Virgins thereabout; who supposing themselves much superiour in Birth and Fortune, could ill endure to hear her praises every where spoken of, especially by the Young Men, whilst they stood neglected, insomuch that not knowing otherways how to vent their Spleen, they would often take an occasion openly to affront her in the Street, and at Merry-making, calling her Beggars Brat, (and uttering many other unseemly Speeches) which she bore as long as she could endure with a becoming patience, and strove by gentle perswasions and reproofs to win them to a reconcilement, and often with tears in her lovely eyes, she would be apt to say, you should not methinks envy me at this rate, who never injured you, but strive to do you all the good Offices I can. What if my Parents are as you suppose them, mean, and I not so well Descended as your selves, though in that you may be mistaken; it might have been your Case had Heaven seen fit, and had it been so,

tell

tell me which of you would not have been afflicted to have been used as you unkindly use me? These or the like Expressions being uttered in vain, and many ways being contrived by her Ill-willers to discourage those Suitors that sought her Love; she being by this time fifteen years of Age, wherefore to end the strife, and in hopes to be kindly used amongst Strangers, she resolved to make it her Request to her Parents, that she might take her Lot in search of her Fortune: The which she did with tears in her eyes, telling them the cause, but they long time opposed it; using many arguments to perswade her to the contrary: But finding the reasons she urged weighty, and tending to her advantage, they left it to her discretion.

CHAP. VI.

How the Blind-Beggars Daughter Left her Fathers House to seek her Fortune, the reason why she did it, and the Entertainment she found.

The Day being come that Pretty Betty the Blind Beggars Daughter should depart, being furnished with Cloaths, Money, & other necessaries, she fell upon her knees and craved her Parents Blessing, which being given, with many Prayers to Heaven for her Prosperity, they took a sad Farewell, and each betook them

viz. Monford to his Mumping Trade, his Wife to her Wheel, and the Daughter to seek her Fortune.

Pretty Betty having left her Fathers House or rather Smoak-Loft, went pensive along the Road towards Stratford, as one not resolved whether to go, but rather trusting Fortune and her good Angel to direct her; and so travelling all night by the Light of the Moon, by Sun-Rise she came to Rumford in Essex, where finding her self Faint, she betook her self to an Inn, and there sitting down, called for somewhat wherewith to refresh her, looking pensive and sad, and often sighing at her hard fortune; which the Mistris of the house perceiving, as also her neat Guard and modest Behaviour, began to question her, from whence she was, or whether she was bound? who told her she was one that had been well educated by Indulgent Parents, but was now contrary to her former expectation, forced to seek her Fortune; and that she was Born near London: Upon this the good woman being more and more taken with her Carriage, demanded if she would be content to stay with her till she could better provide for her advantage, and that she would use her as a Daughter rather then a Servant; to this after a while having weighed and considered it, she consented, and in the performance of

what

what ever she undertook, discharged her self so well that she gained the love and applause of all that observed her, insomuch that her Name for Beauty and Ingenuity began to spread, and abundance of young men resorted to the House, which created a great Trade, on purpose to see her. who generally took a liking, for Nature had made her so Lovely and Charming that she could not but be admired; insomuch that many of them as they found opportunity began to buz Love-Stories in her Ears, to which she gave but little heed, till four Suitors of greater worth beat off these little Assailants, and layed a closer Siege, as the following Chapter will appear.

CHAP. VII.

How Pritty *Betty* the Blind Beggers Daughter Living in an Inn at Rumford, was courted by divers persons of Good Birth and Fortune, &c.

IT being by this time secretly whispered that pretty Betty must be more then she seemed as to her Parentage, it made her Reputation grow higher, insomuch that the Inn-Keepers Son, a London Merchant, a Gentleman of a Good Estate, and a Rich Knight, Courted her Favour; against whose importunities she urged the meanness of her Birth, and inequality

of

of Fortune; intreating them if they were in
est as she could not otherways imagine, to
spare the Blushes of an Innocent Maid, or if
in earnest, to consider how much whoever of
them had her, would impair himself by so une-
qual a Match, and place his affection else where,
least he not meeting in her his expectation, his
Love after Marriage should decay and turn to
Reproach, which she said would break her poor
Heart. This modest objection possessed them
with further thoughts of her concealing the
worth of her Birth and Parentage, and gave
more Fuel to their passion; so easie is man to
believe the thing he would have, insomuch that
they began to renew their protestations of Love
and intire affection, offering her Rings, gloves
and Jewels, but she would not accept them,
least the taking the Gift without the Man
might be prejudicial to her Fame; for all of
them she well knew she could not have, or whe-
ther any of them, when they came to know
that her Father was a Beggar would have her,
she could not well believe, though they severally
promised to Love her as dear as Life, and
maintain her in the hight of Gallantry; whose
Addresses her Master and Mistris suffered for
the sake of their Profit; yet she growing con-
scious of the injury she might do them by hin-
dering their Fortunes, made a Resolution to
discover

discover her Parents, and that way try the sincerity of their affections, and accordingly did it.

CHAP. VIII.

How pretty *Betty* being Wooed by her Masters Son, a Merchant, a Gentleman, and a Knight, upon her declaring her Parentage, was Slighted by all but the Kt. and of the agreement she made.

OUr Beautiful Virgin being hardly pressed for Love and enjoyment, found her self obliged to take a course that might rid her of her Lovers, or allot one of them to her share; wherefore she told them she was not really at her own disposal her Parents being alive, therefore if they Loved her as they said, and seeing but one could enjoy her, she was contented her Father should choose for her, of whose choice she would approve.

This set them in a manner at Daggers-Drawing who should get thither first, but whither to go they knew not: Therefore desired to be informed, every ones heart being filled with joy, not doubting to carry the prize; when thus she began.

My Parents Worthy Sirs, Live on *Bednal-Green*, my Father is the Beggar that is lead with a Dog and a Bell, Living upon the charity

rity of good people; and my Mother a poor Woman that Spins for bread, yet these are my Parents, therefore I will not be induced by any means, to Marry without their Consent.

This struck our Gallants for a while as mute as a Mouse in a Cheese, after which they made some difficulty to believe it, saying, it could not be, that such home-spun Creatures could be the Parents of so Beautiful a Maid; but the insisting on it, and giving them an account of the Leaving them, and the reason, they began to scratch their Noddles, and stamp on the ground, drawing in their Horns faster then they had put them out, the Merchant, the Gentleman, and the Inn-Keepers Son, swearing if so, it was no Wike for them, for they would not be Noted with one of a Beggars degree, and so they troopt off. But the Young Knight who was inflamed with Love, and having a great Estate, stood not upon intrest so much as pleasing his Fancy; after he had paused a while, took the Blushing Maid by the hand, and said, you see my dearest, how those that Courted you in hopes you were a great Fortune, are vanished now they find their mistake: Say, will you yield to one more constant, who truly loves you for your beauty and good Parts, and you shall be without

delay, sole Mistris of him, and all that is his.

To which she answered with a Sigh, alas, Sir, I dare not expect so great a happiness, or if I durst, I would not dispose of my self even to you, who (though blushing) I must confess I ever esteemed above the rest, without consent of my Parents, for though they are poor, they are my Parents still.

This modelly kindled his passion more and more, wherefore after much discourse, and many vows of Constancy, it was agreed that he should be ready with a Horse and Servants the next Morning early, and that she would come to him, that they might Ride to Bednal-green to require the Old Man's consent; yet this was not carried so secretly, but Spies being abroad discovered it, not onely to the Knights Uncle who managed his Estate, to most of the Young-Men of Rumford, who were her admirers.

CHAP. IX.

How pritty *Betty* Rode behind the Knight to her Fathers House, and what befell by the way, as also when she arrived there, how her Father dropt Angels with the Knights Uncle that opposed the Match.

OUr Beautiful Virgin meeting her courteous Knight at the time and place appointed,

pointed, relying upon his Fidelity, made no scruple to use his Servants help in setting her behind him; but scarcely were they out of the Town, but the Knights Uncle coming to the Inn and finding neither of them there, suspected what had been told him to be true, and thereupon he followed to prevent the March, as also did divers Young-men who were deeply in love with her, to rescue her from the Knight, whom they supposed had carried her away by force.

So that great was the hurry and confusion, and the Towns-Men taking the nearer way, got before him e're he arrived at Bednal-green, and fell upon him without giving him leave to speak for himself, or suffering his Mistris to excuse it; so that there began a fierce conflict, till such time as divers persons that were travelling the Road came in and parted them, whereby they came to a right understanding; which made those that had misused him beg his Pardon, which he granted, and dismissing them, kept on his way still coming to the Old Man's Door they alighted; which made him upon the hearing of Horses trample, (being a thing very unusual) start from the Fire, and put his head out of his Window, and not understanding the meaning of it, e're the Knights Uncle came puffing and blowing at a strange rate; Crying why how now Nephew, what's

this I hear of you, are you mad to disgrace your family by marrying a Beggars-Brat, for shame, for shame, consider better then to make your self a Laughing-stock to the World, by such an unseemly Match: Pray how came this about you Baggage you? But however, I say Nephew, leave her, and I will provide you a Fortune, Rich, and Suittable to your Condition.

To this the young Knight would have replyed, but the Begger growing Chollerick to hear his Daughter so used, interrupted him.

I cannot says the Old man, see you at all, but Sir, (what ever you are) I hear you too much, and more then becomes a Civil Gentleman; nor do I count my Girl so mean, to suffer her to be Railed on at my own Door; therefore pray Sir hold your prating, or I shall feel for you, with my Staff: I have known the day, when a Taller Fellow then you, durst not have put me in a passion; If your Kinsman does not think my Child a fit Match for him, let her alone, and welcome: But I think in Beauty, and good Breeding she is not wanting. And as for Money, be it known to you, her Father is ready to drop Angels with you for his Girl, if you have any of your own; d'ye mark me there?

This smart speech, put the Gentlemen to

a Non-plus's for a while; but coming to milder terms, the dropping buisines was concluded on.

And the Gentleman imediately sending his Servants, to fetch what Gold he had, whilst the Beggar from under a heap of Raggs, and Old-Shooes, pull'd out a Cats-kin or two stuffed with Gold, whereby it appeared his Trade had been very advantageous; and each party being ready, they rained a golden shower so plentifully, that the Gentleman's Stock failed him, and the Begger not hearing it Chink, fell into a Laughter, and said, how now Sir, is your Money done so soon? I thought at first you had more words then Money; pray for your Credits sake, try your friends; for I have three or four Cats-kins with Golden Puddings in their Bellys yet: Indeed, said the Gentleman, I am content to own you have out-done me; and think you have the Philosophers-Stone, or keep a Familiar, to bring it you from the Golden-Mountains; But seeing the World goes so well with you, I shall no further go about to perswade my Nephew from being your Son-in-Law; but begg pardon for what I have done: O do you so, said the Begger; then things may be better perhaps then you expect; when turning to the Knight, gather up said he, the

Iosle

loose Coyns I have scattered, and here's a Cat-skin to make that up three Thousand Pounds, besides a hundred more to buy her a Gown. Take this as her present Portion, and as you behave your self, expect more hereafter: Remember I give her you, and with her my Blessing; go to Church, and be Married, a Gods Name: Upon which the Kt. and his fair Mistris falling on their Knees, gave him twenty thanks, and departed, whilst those that had been Suitors, hearing what had happened, were ready to Hang themselves for madness.

CHAP. X.

How pretty *Betty* was Married to the Kt. & her true Pedigree discovreed, together, with the Festival and Joy that insued.

THings being come to this pass, great preperations were made for the Wedding; to which resorted many worthy personages, no cost being spared, either in rich Apparel or sumptuous fare, whilst the lovely Bride was led to Church by her worthy Bridegroom, feasting the Eyes of the beholders with her Beauty; and when the sacred bands were ty'd, they return'd with the like Splendor to the place of Festival, Excellently becoming and gracing what they

wore

wore, as if Nature had made her the most exact pattern of Beauty; being arrived and the Tables spread, the Bride now of a beggers Daughter made a Lady took her place, out-shining other Beauties that were there as far as the Moon is out shone by the Sun: and now nothing but the old Beggar and his Wife wanting, when they soon came richly dressed in silk and Velvet Imbroidered with Gold, so that all things went on in Joy and Merriment, and great was the satisfaction the company received in their repast, but more in the Musick, Dancing, Malquerading, and the like; while the old Man had prepared to celebrate the happy Nuptials, and in the end, craving attention, he Sung this SONG.

You Gallants all that here are come,
to make this day more happy prove,
Know, though i'm blind I am not Dumb,
but wish you happiness and Love:
The Bride, though her Birth seem but mean
descended of a worthy Race;
Her Ancestors they great have been,
if you her Pedigree do Trace.

Know, she is *Monfords* Daughter fair,
who lost his sight i'th Wars of *France*;
Who ever since in begging here
did take his happy thriving chance:

Consider

Conſider *B*ridegroom, then her Birth,
whom ſome do think but mean and low
As much of *H*onour can bring forth
as you have power to ſhow.

The Name of Monford which had been held ſo famous for Vertue and Valour in thoſe daps, did not a little cauſe wonder in the hearers, who deſiring him to explain himſelfe, he plainly told them his adventures in France and England, and how he took up the trade of Begging and the like, which cauſed a general joy, ſince all that had formerly known him by that name, ſuppoſed him to be dead; and the Bridegroom was pronounced now more happy then ever. So his lovely Bride, whoſe birth and fortune equaled his in all degrees; and ſo old Monford promiſing, for the credit of his Daughter, to leave of the Beging trade, and live upon what he had got. The day was concluded, to the Joy and ſatisfaction of all Partys.

FINIS.